

26 March 1953

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted]

[redacted] is of the faculty of the University [redacted] and is a cleared consultant of the Agency. I talked with him this morning by the arrangement of [redacted] head of A&E, who felt I might be interested in talking with him in view of the investigation of A&E presently pending. As Colonel Baird previously had expressed a similar view, I felt it desirable not to turn down the invitation. The meeting was in [redacted] office, he being absent during most of the talk although I specifically asked him to be present. My impression is that he set up the interview at a time when he had a previous outside engagement so as to enable me to question [redacted] privately.

I asked [redacted] his views as to the role psychology should play in the Agency. He answered that he felt there were four areas of activity: (i) in the recruitment or selection of new personnel and the placement thereof, (ii) as a handmaiden of Training, (iii) research, and (iv) morale or employee-employer relations. Although [redacted] broke the fields of activity into four, it might well be said that he actually should have said five for the reason that, attached to each of the four, he envisaged assessment-evaluation activities.

The first area of activity addresses itself to the specific problem of reducing turnover and its value is thus more easily measurable than in the others. [redacted] drew attention to the fact that reduction in turnover, in addition to the preservation-of-investment factor, also involves the element of security, thus adding another reason to make use of psychological techniques in this field. It was also brought out that the techniques involved may be applied by other than psychologists. Although theoretically it would be desirable to use a psychological screen on all new employees, [redacted] recognized that this would not be practical, especially for those coming in at higher grades and said that, as a rule of thumb, such techniques should not be used in connection with the employment of those who are being hired on the basis of achievements.

[redacted] expressed the view that the techniques of psychology both should be applied in the training process itself and as a measure of the results of the training.

On the subject of research, I asked [redacted] to provide me with a working definition and explained that my reason for asking was that

there had been expressed to me the fear that psychologists coming to the Agency might use it merely as a convenient support for personal academic study and investigations. [] acknowledged this possibility and said that he felt that it may have actually taken place during the early years of the Agency but that he was convinced that such would not occur under []. He went on to say that, in this case, research means the development of techniques needed to fill the peculiar requirements of the Agency plus the testing of techniques currently employed, these two activities being inseparable parts of the trial and error method.

[] was a little hesitant in advocating morale-through-psychology and readily agreed with my comment that if the first three activities were carried on with reasonable success a fourth would not be needed.

We discussed also the definitions of various terms other than research. For example, I raised the question of the true difference between assessment and evaluation, the net result of our conversation on that subject being that ^{one} ~~the~~ must needs know in what particular sense you are using the word before you are sure of what you are talking about, as either word can have a specialized meaning in limited use. From this I raised the question of whether there might not be a better title for [] shop and [] gave as a possibility "Personnel Analysis."

When I asked [] his views as to a desirable organization administratively, he had only one concrete suggestion: that research be centralized and not dispersed. As for operational chain of command and general administration, he had no plan to offer.

While acknowledging that it was a difficult question to answer, I asked [] whether he had any views regarding the productivity that reasonably might be expected of psychologists on duty with the Agency as this obviously would bear on the size of the staff, its cost to the Agency, etc. [] represented that he knew of no general rule that could be applied other than to obtain the opinions of various qualified psychologists as to the number of individuals they felt would be needed to carry out a specific program.

I asked [] whether he was acquainted with [] professional reputation. He replied that [] was relatively unknown among psychologists but that he [] believed that his professional standing was good.

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[] returned shortly before my talk with [] ended
and I took occasion to give a summary review, specifically mentioning
the concern which had been expressed over the possibility that the Agency
might be used as a resting home for psychologists.

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